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the curse. This is unbridled imagination. But it is a contradiction when the same Arabs imagine that these images of animals will, on the day of universal resurrection, snarl at the artist who made them, and upbraid him because he was not able to endow them with souls. A merely unbridled phantasy can, after all, always take a side-turn ; as, for instance, in the case of the poet, of whom Cardinal Este asked, when he was presented with a copy of the book dedicated to him : “ Master Ariosto, where the devil did you pick up all this mad stuff ? ” This sort of phantasy is superabundance and luxury from pure wealth ; but ruleless phantasy approaches insanity, wherein the imagination plays unlimited revel in the mind, and the unhappy victim has no control whatever over the course of his ideas.

It is still to be remarked that the political artist has, as well as his æsthetical brother, the power to rule and govern the world (*mundus vult decipi*) by the power of imagination, which he causes to pass current as actuality ; for instance, of liberty (as in the English Parliament), or of equality (as in the French Parliament), which, however, consist of mere formalities. Nevertheless, it is better that mankind should have were it but the semblance of this ennobling good, than feel itself palpably deprived of it.

RAPHAEL AND MICHAEL ANGELO.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF HERMANN GRIMM BY IDA M. ELIOT.

The first of Raphael’s letters is dated at Florence, in the year 1508, and contains nothing of importance ; the second, written in the same year, is only a few lines in length, and is addressed to Domenico Alfani :

“ I beg you, Menecho,” he writes, “ send me Riciardo’s love-songs, which tell of the passion that once overcame him when travelling.” Also, he wished for a sermon, and asked Menecho to remind Cesarino to send it to him ; and he would

like to have Menecho ask Madonna Atalanta for the money—he preferred gold. Love-songs, a sermon, and gold—in these few lines we find the whole century.

The next letter, also in 1508, is written from Rome. Bramante, who was related to Raphael, had caused him to be recalled there. The pope commanded him to come, that he might paint the Vatican. Here he met Michael Angelo. Until now he had seen him only a few times in Florence. In this letter he thanks Francesco Francia for the portrait which he has sent, and excuses himself for not having had his own painted, that he might send it in return for the present, according to agreement. Passavant believes that Raphael had in person sought out the famous old master in Bologna. The way in which he gained Francia's love, his expressions of praise, and at last his confidence in him, all show a charming youthful feeling. How Francia felt towards him is shown in a sonnet which is quoted, and in which he gives Raphael the highest place in art, while he himself modestly steps into the background.

Next is a letter to Simon Ciarla, written in 1514, in which he speaks of marriage, and will not consent to any plans in regard to it. He treats this subject in a business-like way, and still not without the graceful ease with which he always handles great subjects as well as trifling ones. From these things he passes to the building of St. Peter's, and breaks out into hearty praise of the life in Rome. Every day, he concludes, the pope summons him, and converses with him concerning the building. It is to be the first temple in the world. It will cost one million in gold, and the pope thinks of nothing else than its completion.

Raphael wished to remain unmarried. He says in his letters that in Rome he would have expected quite different matches from those offered him. He did not wish any wife; with a wife he would never have reached the point where he now stood, and every day he thanked God because he had acted so wisely.

In spite of these reasons, afterwards he did not feel himself in a condition to refuse the hand of the young Maria di Bibbiena, niece of the cardinal of the same name. The proposal was as

advantageous as it was honorable for him. His death and Maria's occurred at almost the same time. The grave-stones stand side by side, and the inscriptions say that Maria and Raphael died betrothed lovers.

He died, therefore, without having been married. Michael Angelo also, as well as Leonardo da Vinci and Titian, died unmarried. Dr. Guhl has remarked, on this subject, that perhaps it may be advisable for artists thus to take their freedom, and seems to give the lives of these three men in a certain way as illustrations. I cannot agree with him. The similarity of these three lives seems to me only accidental in this respect. It is well known how people married in Italy at that time, and above all, in what relation the women stood to the men. One can most easily obtain an insight into this from the life of Benvenuto Cellini. The most unlimited freedom ruled. Titian had children, for whom he provided very handsomely. It is nowhere recorded of Michael Angelo or Leonardo da Vinci that they had any dislike to women. Legitimate marriage through the church and before the law was not at that time the means by which the favor of beautiful women was gained. It was no reproach to be an illegitimate child. If Michael Angelo had met Vittoria Colonna in his younger days, and a marriage between them had been proposed, he would not have considered marriage a hindrance to his artist career. Everywhere—among artists as well—it is a sad sight when wife and children change free work into an oppressive burden, but all such doubts may be answered where one happy marriage gives the purest impulse to work and true development.

Raphael liked women. Vasari tells how once love drew him off from his work, and his friends at last knew no better plan than to bring the beautiful lady to his scaffolding, where she sat the whole day with him, and he, not missing her, kept at work. In Arnim's novel, "Raphael and his Women Neighbors," the artist's life is pictured in the midst of beauty. Without care, and with a fancy full of noble thoughts, he gave himself up to their charms, obeying without any constancy the pleasant law of indolence till at last, the life he was leading grated upon him.

He must have had misgivings; he tried to tear himself away, but at his work his thoughts gave him no rest. One of the three sonnets which were in his handwriting on the back of some studies, and in that way preserved to us, gives us this most direct insight into the soul whose passion he was trying to conquer. He seems to have written the poem to get free from the thoughts which hovered around him, alluring him on; one feels his struggle, and how impossible resistance will finally become.

The next letter is written to Count Castiglione. In it he speaks of Ideals. He expresses himself in the clearest way. What cannot be understood by those who lack the inspiration of the creative spirit—that the Ideal is no mere universal, abstract, vanishing, to be obtained out of things like an essence by persevering individuals, but that it is a form of the thing itself, created by a real mind; that it hovers over everything which we call nature, but is revealed only to him who has received the power to see it, to each one by himself, and in his own way—all this Raphael now declares, and he does it in such ordinary words that one feels he is speaking of something very usual and common.

“With regard to Galatea,” he writes, “I should consider myself a great master if there could be found in it only half the great things of which your highness writes. I recognize in your words the love which you feel towards me. For the rest, I must tell you that in order to paint a beautiful woman’s figure, I must see many beautiful women, and also your highness must stand by me to select the most beautiful. But since a just decision is as rare as a beautiful woman, I shall make use of a certain fancy which has come into my mind. I do not know whether it possesses artistic excellence or not, but I shall strive hard to carry it out; and herewith I commend myself to your highness.”

Count Baldassare Castiglione was one of the most brilliant and honored men of his time, distinguished on account of his intellect and his good taste. This letter is dated in the same year that Raphael was definitely appointed by the pope as director of the building of St. Peter’s, with a yearly salary

of three hundred gold scudi. Raphael undertook the building under the worst conditions ; he changed it from the foundation, for he put aside Bramante's plan, to which years afterwards Michael Angelo returned.

At the same time with Raphael's appointment appeared a letter from the pope, in which he announces to the people of Rome that no stone shall be cut for building St. Peter's except with Raphael's consent. Under a penalty of from one hundred to three hundred gold scudi, to be enforced according to Raphael's own discretion, all the stone-cutters in the city were constrained to obey the command. By these means Raphael was enabled to control the excavations, and save many monuments of ancient art. The greater part of the beautiful statues of antiquity which are now admired in the museum of Rome were discovered here and there about this time.

Four years later the artist gave an account to his master of his acts as conservator of the city of Rome, and the document, with his quiet, clear statement, should be taken as a model for such reports. He begins by recognizing the superiority of the old Romans—at that time nothing was known of Greek art—who accomplished very easily many things which we consider impossibilities. He tells how he has searched through the city with this thought in mind, how he has studied the old authors, and how it has filled him with pain to see the body of the beautiful city, once the queen of the world, so grievously torn to pieces.

He then speaks of those who took part in the work of destruction, and does not hesitate to say that popes themselves formerly gave up the splendid buildings to ruin, but that now Leo X. was called upon to restore them.

He afterwards describes how he has drawn a plan of ancient and modern Rome ; gives his opinion about some single buildings ; and then general statements about the architecture of the old Romans, and its progress down to his own time ; and ends with an account of technical geometric expedients which one might use.

The whole letter is divided in the clearest way into different parts, and contains, besides this account, from a practical point

of view, the noblest enthusiasm for the art of the old Romans. Involuntarily one places himself by Raphael's side and follows him from time to time, as if these things were the most important affairs of to-day, and as if centuries had not passed since then. One feels with what freshness he attempts every thing and how easy to him were the things which he undertook. During the time that such a commission formed one of the incidental works which he carried on, and when even the direction of the building of the enormous church is of less importance than his paintings, which followed one after the other, each being a new and unexpected revelation of his soul, still he found time to spend with his friends, and with women, whose society he enjoyed. He did not seek solitude, like Michael Angelo ; he spread out his arms and drew to his heart the world, for which he cared. And with this power was united what youthful beauty ! When he died there was no artist in Rome who did not follow his body weeping, and when the pope received news of his death he burst into bitter tears. "*O felice e beata anima !*" exclaims Vasari, after he has described with what honors and solemnities his funeral was celebrated, " who does not like to speak of thee, to praise thee and thy works. When such an artist died, the art of painting might well lay itself in the grave, for when he closed his eyes, it was left upon the earth, as it were, sightless. We who survive him must imitate the good, yes, the excellent example which he has set us ; and according to the merit of his art, and following our duty toward it, must speak of him forever with honors a thousand-fold. For creative genius, coloring, and power of execution have been brought to perfection by him ; no one has imagined how far he could advance, and no one may hope to reach higher than he."

When Vasari writes in this way, he seems for the moment to have forgotten Michael Angelo entirely. At other times he always mentioned the latter as the greatest artist, and the same feeling was shared by many of his contemporaries, who gave Raphael a subordinate rank.

But it seems as if the thought of the death of this wonderful spirit had erased even the memory of Michael Angelo, who,

after Raphael was gone, continued working alone and without rivals for many years, preventing by his powerful creations that decline of art which immediately followed his death.

Michael Angelo was in Florence when Raphael died. From what we learn, more through suggestions than direct information, it appears that these two men stood in opposition to one another. The one had no need of the other ; each sought to surpass the other, and to contend for mastery. This seems quite natural to us, as it does when in old poems we read that two heroes who meet begin at once to fight with one another, until it is decided which is the victor. But when two eagles fly towards the sun in emulation, on that account they need not be enemies, and the feeling between them is not the jealousy which holds lower natures apart. These men felt their strength, and each strove to be first ; modesty was out of place. Both placed the art of the ancients higher than their own, as Goethe considered Shakespeare very far above him, but neither of them wished that any living person should call his rank in question. It was the same feeling which kept Schiller and Goethe apart for so many years, although they lived close together ; and this gives to their correspondence that strange admixture which is called coldness by those who must give a name to everything.

Each recognized the greatness of the other, but neither would descend from his height. One thing, however, will serve least of all as an index of their feeling towards one another—that is, the disputes of their disciples, and the hate with which they persecuted each other. Parties may hate each other, as nations may do, while the leaders quietly and respectfully defend each his own standpoint. When men like Raphael and Michael Angelo stand as opponents, there is no use in repeating single incidents or expressions. If one observes them both, weighs their power, tries to picture to himself Rome at that time—the centre of political power and the fine arts—remembers popes like Julius and Leo—one sees that necessarily there must have been a personal rivalry, and this may be described in a poetical form, just as the scenes of a drama unfold in the fancy, as soon as characters which

are noble and freed from all narrow relations meet each other in their full power. The usual enmity which results from mutual misunderstandings occasioned by ignorance, or when one intentionally holds his hands over his eyes, and when there is also a feeling of weakness on both sides, had no place between these men. Michael Angelo may have said that Raphael accomplished nothing through his genius, but everything through effort. Would Michael Angelo have intended by this to disparage Raphael—Michael Angelo, who knew so well what work meant? In my opinion this speech is such great praise that I do not know how he could have spoken so as to express more clearly that he understood his youthful companion, admired, and honored him.

Raphael's never-failing loveliness of character—by which, as Vasari says, he showed all artists how they should behave towards nobles, the middle class, and the poorest people—was not at all a trait of Michael Angelo's. He did not hover over the mountains of life as if borne on clouds ; he seized hold of the solid stone, threw the pieces on either side, and so made a path for himself over these mountains. He gave rough, brusque answers, and never troubled himself about any one. When Pope Julius was urging him to finish one of his works, and asked when he would be ready with it, he answered, "When I can" — "*quando potiò.*" The pope broke into a passionate rage, and raised his staff against the artist, and as he echoed the words "*quando potiò,*" "*quando potiò,*" he struck him. That was the position these two men held towards each other. They were even with one another. They knew one another too well to separate. They quarrelled whenever together, for this was not the only time ; but neither could do without the other, and since each had his own footing, upon which he stood his ground proudly before the world, it came to pass that they were drawn together by the very things which would have separated weaker natures.

Every one who feels himself great is attracted to any one whom he recognizes as his equal in that respect. Even the bloodiest quarrel cannot drive these asunder. Involuntarily their glances seek and find each other, for every one searches

out him whose character is a measure of his own, and the desire to compare himself with him conquers all obstacles. Thus it follows that the great attracts the great ; the common, the common. This law determines the lives of beggars and kings. Some relations could not be explained without it. Voltaire and Frederick learned to know each other thoroughly. The king knew that Voltaire was false, deceitful, and much more vain of the connection with him than attached to him. Still he wrote to him, opened his heart to him, and waited for his answers. He felt that this man stood high enough to understand him, and all other feelings sank into insignificance before this.

If one should read through Michael Angelo's poems, and his life, as written by Vasari and Condivi, one would have an impression of a man who travelled over a terrible road entirely alone. But if one looks through the notices of the lives of contemporary artists, then one will see how boundless was his influence over all, and how all rays of art centred in him. Everywhere his hand is busy ; unselfishly he helps one and another in their work ; blocks of marble wrongly cut, and lying spoiled and useless, excite him to see what can be made from them ; in the midst of the fortification-work of his native city, he carves in the stone of the wall the Flying Victory. Work itself interests him — it makes no difference what it is. His impetuous nature continually carries him away, but he always returns to himself ; and the way in which this happens is doubly touching and affecting. No one can be in doubt as to whether the heart of this man was hard and unfriendly, or whether it was gentle, and full of a noble love of humanity. When I read how Beethoven loved mankind, and still avoided them, the reserved bearing of the great Florentine occurred to me, while Mozart's sociable manners toward all who met him reminded me of Raphael. But how different were the lives of these two. Like two butterflies from the garden of the Hesperides, the storms of life blew them out into the world, where they perished, — one because he was carried into the fields of too luxurious bloom ; the other, because he flew over stony places, till wearied out, he fell to the ground.

Mozart's creations, like Raphael's, stand complete, as if they had arisen so at first. There is nothing to change in them. They show no effort; they exist; their only aim is to fill a void which could not be filled without them. They may be studied from all points. One walks around them as round a blooming aloe. Shakespeare's poems, also, are so made. But although they are so finished and perfect, one thing is wanting to them—one thing that Michael Angelo's works possess, that Beethoven's music has, and that brings these men into such a human relation with us—the evidence of a divine yearning for expression which filled the souls of these composers, and which is the true origin of their works. They do not let us sink into careless rapture, but represent the struggle and the victory, or perhaps only the anticipation of victory, in vivid light and forms that cannot be forgotten. When I study Raphael's Madonna, in the Dresden gallery, the whole world around seems to dissolve in mist, and this figure alone is present to my eyes. In one word, it deprives the mind of freedom; it takes possession of one, and soars with him into higher regions.

How different is the impression which a piece of sculpture by Michael Angelo, though unfinished, has upon me. I know it only through a plaster-cast in the new museum. The original is in Paris. It represents a dying youth, one of the figures which were to surround the monument of Pope Julius, according to the first plan and beginning of the work. These were meant to represent the conquered provinces of the kingdom. The body stands upright; a band passing round below the breast holds it up like a chain, and keeps it from falling to the ground; one arm touches the breast, the other stretches up over the head, that bends on one side wearily, with the look of death. The divine tenderness of youth is shed all over the figure. A dying smile plays around the lips; an expression of the deepest grief weighs down the eyes. One stands before it, and his very soul is touched with grief for the beauty thus dissolving in death. One feels himself more free and noble, and he would like to perish in the same way. Every line carries out the same thought. The narrow hips, the powerless knees,

the relaxed hands, the eyes over which the lids have fallen, before which the vanishing world already surges back and forth, soon to disappear altogether — this work draws me forcibly to the heart of a man who is so powerful an artist ; and thinking of Michael Angelo, the dark clouds under which he walks seems to me more home-like than the unending clearness to which Raphael carries me on wings.

We Germans place the artist above all his works. Goethe is greater than all his poems ; Schiller himself dearer to us than what he wrote. This is the reason that for us Hamlet is Shakespeare's greatest work, for it reveals most deeply his own soul, while the others give only visions which do not come near to us. In Hamlet one plunges with the poet into the great questions of life, and realizes with a shudder the narrowness of the lines between clearness and madness that form the paths on which the soul travels. This play does not let us rest ; it drives us on at its own pace. Michael Angelo does the same ; and I would more willingly follow him, although his path is lighted by dim stars, than rest with Raphael in the full light that bestows everything, but leaves nothing for which one's thoughts can strive.

The "Artist Letters" contain nothing written by Michael Angelo at the time of Raphael's death. His first three letters are dated 1496, 1504, 1529 ; they cover a long space of time ; his youth, his first stay in Rome, and the troubles in Florence ; after which, again in Rome, he entered upon that period of his life when, ruling alone in the realm of art, he piled work upon work until his death. There are extant numerous letters written at this time ; to this period belong most of his poems, and, generally, what we have learned about him from his contemporaries relates to these later years of his life.

The first letter, of July 2, 1496, announces his arrival in Rome. Born in 1474, he was in his twenty-second year, but he had already experienced a great deal. His whole life was one continued struggle with men and circumstances, beginning with his first step in his artist career. When a child at school, he passed all his leisure hours in drawing. No persuasion, no punishment, could break up this fancy. He conquered his

father's opposition, and at fourteen years was apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandajo. His friendship with young Granacci, who was studying painting there, led him to the workshop of the master. He made astonishing progress. We have still preserved one specimen of his style and manner, which shows how his capability and his character were early developed. One of his fellow-students had a study of drapery by Ghirlandajo to copy. Michael Angelo took the sheet, and with a few touches improved the figure and the style of the teacher. Granacci preserved the sketch, and afterwards gave it to Vasari, who sixty years after showed it to Michael Angelo. Laughingly he recognized his work, and added, "At that time I knew more about art than now." He often felt a desire to test himself on new work, and to compete with others. It was a delight to him to perceive in visible form what he could do—a kind of rejoicing in the consciousness of power. Where he felt it belonged to him to be first, he did not wish to seem to be second. There is a trace of the rivalry of the artisan in this striving. He was not satisfied with the consciousness that he himself was the greatest, but desired the public to perceive it also. It must know that he understood more than all others. He wished for favor, but he insisted upon justice. Schiller had somewhat of this feeling when he criticised severely the poems of Bürger and Matthisson, and even Goethe's Egmont. He was considering then only the works, not the persons; while Goethe, when he in his youth attacked Wieland, had in mind the person, and disposed of the works in a few lines. But although Michael Angelo was jealous of his position, still he never entertained the thought that because he was great, others were small. He gave assistance in their work to many artists, made sketches for their pictures, gave them good advice as to how they should progress. Had a greater artist than he appeared—had he been forced to confess to himself in his inmost heart, "He knows more than you"—he would not have hesitated a moment to declare openly what he thought. We can see how true this is from an anecdote which De Thou has preserved for us in his memoirs. This shows that the pride of the great master was very different from the self-

laudation of people with limited power, and his modesty sprang from a source quite distinct from that of the deceitful self-depreciation of lower minds, who blame themselves in the presence of other people, in the hope of hearing their own praises in answer.

De Thou was once in Mantua, where the Princess Isabella D'Este was showing him and others the art treasures in her palace. Among them was a Cupid, a work in marble by Michael Angelo. After the company had studied it admiringly for a long time, some one unveiled a second statue which was standing near, covered with a silk cloth, a work of antique art. The two were now compared, and every one was ashamed that he had estimated so highly the work of the Florentine. The antique was still covered with traces of the earth in which it had lain; but it seemed to be alive, while the other was merely a stone, without life. Then the guests were told that Michael Angelo had enjoined upon the princess never to show his work except with the Greek, and, moreover, in this unexpected way, so that connoisseurs could judge how far the art of the ancients surpassed the modern.

It has been asked what has become of these two statues, and the truth of the story has been by some altogether doubted. But that makes no difference; whether it has happened or not, the story bears in itself a truth which is higher than the so-called historic truth. At any rate, Michael Angelo is considered capable of such a courageous act. The reason that general characteristics are concentrated into special cases is owing to the mysterious power of the mythical element concealed in the lives of great men, and in the significant events in the development of nations, for in these it plans and arranges till nations and men are brought into harmony with the national Ideal. Things that have happened do not remain memorable in the lap of memory, but are tossed hither and thither as the sea tosses the stones, until they are rounded off and take a new shape.

The memory of the human race will not endure general traits, but demands definite, visible events; if these are missing, they must be found, and suddenly they appear; without one's

knowing whence they come. Corneille died in poverty. That is well known, but how much does it mean? Mankind demanded a definite illustration, and now it is said that he was so poor that at last he had not enough to buy a pair of shoes.

At Schiller's death there is not money enough to pay for a coffin. Goethe is married to his wife amidst the thunder of cannons. Francesco Francia dies of grief when he sees Raphael's Saint Cecilia; Racine of sorrow on account of the king's displeasure. Belisarius, with sightless eyes, goes begging through the land; Philip of Spain causes the death of Don Carlos; Napoleon, with his banner in his hand, rides over the bridge of Arcola, into the mouths of the Austrian cannon; Cambronne says, "The guard dies, but does not surrender;" or, turning to more distant ages, an Egyptian king at one blow strikes off the heads of a dozen prisoners.

All this is false. It grows like tares among the wheat; no one has sowed them, and they have no right to the ground where they are. But they cannot be rooted out. Always the blue and red flowers will appear among the grain. But many things that we consider as true and fixed are perhaps worth no more, and seldom is an historic book written that does not in this respect correct traditions.

At the foundation of every lie there is an arbitrary statement which is easily shaken off; but in the tradition, even when it springs up in modern times, there is an inextinguishable life-force. The acts of mankind often appear truly artistic; here and there, things which have been done are confirmed; lights are thrown upon some, others are veiled in darkness, so that finally something new is made to appear, that bears about the same relation to what has really taken place that the idealized figure in the painting does to the model which was used.

Schiller worked himself to death—that is acknowledged; Goethe himself says so; and all the reproaches which that fact brings upon the German people are expressed in one line—there was no money to pay for his coffin. Goethe's whole character on one side is expressed in what is related of his marriage. All Racine's faults are shown in the story of the

cause of his death. All the honor of the Spanish papal policy is concentrated in the fable of the death of Don Carlos ; all admiration at the rising power of Napoleon, in the story of how he met danger and conquered it so magically. There is no more touching way of showing the power of poetry than to relate the story of Sophocles, which has also grown into a fable. When he was an old man his children sought to deprive him of the authority of managing his property, because he had grown childish. He went before his judges with his *Œdipus at Colonus* in his hand, and the divine chorus which he read to them from it brought tears to their eyes, and acquitted him. If that is an invention, it could have been invented about Sophocles only ; and in the same way, it could be said of no one but Michael Angelo that he placed his own works by the side of those of the old masters, in order to show how much greater the ancients had been than he himself. The modesty which is shown in the story is not so conspicuous as the pride which made him consider his work worthy to be compared with an antique, even though it fell below it in perfection.

While he was still almost a child, under Ghirlandajo's teaching, Lorenzo di Medici, the most powerful man in Florence, formed the plan of starting a school for sculptors. He owned a garden which was adorned with paintings and old statues, and the pupils were to use these as studies. He wished to have for this school Ghirlandajo's best pupils, and among them were Michael Angelo and Granacci. Michael Angelo worked now with doubled energy. He had the keys of the garden always in his pocket, was there even on holidays, and tried to excel all others, in which he succeeded. He surpassed also young Torrigiano, and, besides, seems to have made of him a sort of laughing-stock, so that one day Torrigiano was so furious through his jealousy that he struck him in the face with his fist, and broke his nose, thus marking him for life. Torrigiano was forced to flee ; Michael Angelo remained in Lorenzo's palace. Lorenzo favored him in every way ; invited him to sit at his table, gave him five ducats every month, and gave his father a government position. At Lorenzo's death,

in the year 1492, Michael Angelo returned to his father's house. He was now eighteen years old. But he had already produced works which were acknowledged as masterly. Now he bought a block of marble, and carved a Hercules four ells in height. This work was everywhere admired, and afterwards was taken to France, where it has since disappeared.

Two years after the death of Lorenzo, his son and successor, Pietro, had carried matters so far that he and his whole family were banished from Florence. Their palace was plundered by the people, the school of old Bertoldi broken up, and all the materials that could be found sold at public auction. Michael Angelo had gone to Bologna before the fall of his patron, and from there to Venice; but finding that his money gave out, he returned to Bologna, where the Bentivogli, friends of the Medici, were rulers of the city, and received him in the heartiest manner. He worked there, and studied Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. His works gained him many friends, but enemies, too, as it seems. This was, perhaps, the reason why he returned to Florence a year after.

At this time was made the Sleeping Cupid, of which I spoke. It was so beautiful that Michael Angelo was advised to bury it, and then pretend it was an antique. Perhaps the Mantua story and this have been confused. Vasari and Condivi tell the account differently, and the former puts at the end a very different moral. He says this work shows that the ancient art could not have excelled the modern — a statement which may be as consistent to the mind of Vasari as the words attributed to Michael Angelo in Mantua are true to his spirit.

The Cupid was sent to Rome; it drew Michael Angelo himself there, and made him famous. Other works which he executed through a series of years increased his fame. I name specially the "Pieta," of which we have a cast in the new Berlin museum, although only a part of it, — the "Body of Christ." This is a magnificent work, full at once of tenderness and strength, the union of which gives to the figure a truly divine light. It has none of the superhuman strength which forms the characteristic of his later works; there is nothing gloomy or gigantic, such as one imagines when his name is

mentioned. Vasari tells that once some strangers from Milan were admiring the work, and attributed it to Gobbo, one of their fellow-citizens. Michael Angelo entered St. Peter's by night, with a light and his tools, and cut his name on the girdle of the Madonna.

His reputation increased the desire which Florence felt to claim him again. In the court of the Palazzo Vecchio lay a huge block of marble, on which some sculptor of indifferent talent had wrought, and which had been left lying there partly cut. The stone was offered to Michael Angelo if he could do anything with it. He went there and made from the block a colossal David, which now stands before the Palazzo Vecchio. Other commissions followed this beginning. He painted and worked in marble and bronze unwearingly, but what increased his fame most of all was the rivalry with Leonardo da Vinci, who at that time was almost fifty years old, while Michael Angelo was not yet thirty. It was for this reason alone that he afterwards left Florence and went to France.

Each of these artists was making an enormous cartoon, representing a battle scene during the time when the Florentines conquered the Pisans. It has been said of these two works that together they furnished the content of all Italian art. All in the city were much excited about the two, and all took sides as to the victor. There is nothing left of the two works. The sculptor Bandinelli destroyed Michael Angelo's, from envy and jealousy. During the disturbances of the year 1512, he procured the keys to the hall in which it was kept, slipped in, and cut it into pieces which have one by one disappeared. Here and everywhere the anger of his rivals pursued Michael Angelo. When the statue of David was put into its place, it had to be guarded at night because stones were thrown at it to injure it.

Meanwhile, Pope Alexander had died; and shortly after, Julius II. became his successor. He called Michael Angelo back to Rome, and his agent in Florence paid him one hundred scudi for travelling expenses. He wished to have a magnificent tomb erected for himself, and he gave the commission to Michael Angelo, who made a plan which Julius approved.

The work began at once, but forty-five years passed before its completion ; the plans were altered and abridged ; war and every kind of fate delayed its execution ; the marble was stolen from Michael Angelo ; he was arrested on account of some money which it was said he received and used for himself ; he was promised more money, and it was not paid ; and the whole thing at last became a burden, which he bore with pain for many years, without being able to free himself from it.

But at that time he anticipated nothing of all this. He stood in the bloom of his years and fame. He had sought to surpass Da Vinci, and Raphael had not yet come upon the stage. When he appeared, the rivalry of art raised a crowd of distinguished artists. They all found plenty of work, and rich reward. The popes knew how to create means for these. Rome was to be the queen in the kingdom of beauty. These were the times when in Germany they were just beginning to act against a supremacy which caused all the gold in the world to be turned into channels centring in Rome. There a very profligate life was the rule. At that time, Ulrich von Hutten wrote his papers against the city, whose tyranny had become unbearable. I mention this here, for, while we study the lives of the great artists who grew up then, observe the tone which prevailed in the dealings of the day,—the blending of the unlimited freedom of the old philosophical way of thinking with the slave-like subjection to the religion of the popes,—if then we see the flowers of literature and art unfold in the midst of all this, this development of things in Italy seems necessary and natural. Quite natural, also, was the newly awakened opposition in the German mind. We see that each side was not understood by the other, and could not be understood. The vices of the priesthood, the crimes of the Borgias, overshadowed for the German view all the intellect and all the beauty ; and what were Germans, at that time, to the Italians ? Germany was a distant, barbarous region, full of rude fanaticism, without any national literature, and without any educated nobility ; a province of the enormous empire, which was brought into contact with its ruler only when he was obliged to punish rebels, and whose language he could not speak. The emperor was a

Spaniard ; the central point of his policy lay in Madrid. In Germany, the learned always wrote in Latin ; and when Hutten first made use of his own language, it was as strange to him as if we to-day should write editorials for the papers in Latin. In Rome, they had just disposed of Savonarola, who, by his doctrines, had excited a city like Florence to insurrection. Why should they trouble themselves about a disturbance in a country beyond the Alps ? It is very possible that Luther and Raphael may have passed one another in Rome, and looked into each other's eyes : the one thinking of his Madonna, his School of Athens, or his beloved one ; the other, with gloomy brow, noting only the ruin which surrounded him, and made of the ground under his feet a desert over which the Roman walked so joyfully and free of care.

While Raphael was steadily rising higher in his art, and in the favor of mankind, through the loveliness of his nature, which was never vexed by any discord in himself, nor by harsh contact with thoughts outside his sphere, Michael Angelo more quietly was working his way up to his great height, and not only fulfilling his art, but also his character, which was growing ever more unbending and severe against the world. There are some irregularities about the payment of the money promised for his work. He wishes to speak to the pope about it. He is rudely sent from the door. Indignant, he goes home, writes a furious letter, sells what he owns to the Jews, and leaves Rome at once. Julius sends couriers after him ; one messenger after another is sent with letters ; but Michael Angelo is unyielding, and goes to Florence. Now three requisitions follow in quick succession, requesting the authorities to send him back. The artist did not obey ; but he feared the power and vengeance of the pope, and, doubting his safety, he meditated a journey to Constantinople, whither the Sultan had invited him, to build a bridge over the Bosphorus. At last he was persuaded to go to Bologna, and meet Julius there. He goes there, has hardly time to change his boots before an ambassador of the pope takes him away to see his holiness in the Palace of the Sixteen.

He enters, and drops upon his knee. The pope looks at him as if he were angry with him, and says, "Instead of coming to find us, you wait until we come to find you out." By this he meant that Bologna is nearer to Florence than to Rome. Michael Angelo begged for pardon. He spoke freely, and without in the least yielding his point. The pope hesitated about answering. But now the scene changes in a very characteristic way: for the bishop who has escorted Michael Angelo to the pope tries to excuse him, and says that artists are ignorant people, who know nothing but their art; that his holiness may condescend to pardon Michael Angelo. In a sudden rage the pope turns upon the bishop, raises his staff, lets it fall on him, and cries, "You alone are ignorant, since you dare to say to this man what I dare not say." Thereupon he blessed Michael Angelo, and gave him a commission to execute a statue of his holiness which should be five ells high.

In the statue he was represented with the hand raised. "Am I giving my blessing or curse?" asked Julius. "You are advising the people of Bologna to be wise," answered Michael Angelo. When he wished to put a book in the left hand, the pope exclaimed, "Give me a sword; I am no scholar." In this position did Michael Angelo, then thirty-two years of age, stand towards the man of seventy, who in the winter of life entered upon a war, and conquered the cities upon which his eyes fell. He took Bologna from the Bentivogli, and even Ravenna from the Venetians. But not long after, his statue was made into a piece of artillery. The head alone was left. So end works of art which are intended to last for centuries.

After the completion of this commission, Michael Angelo returned to Rome, and now painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. It is remarkable that although he was called by himself and others a sculptor, still he has gained his greatest fame by his painting. The cartoon in Florence is the greatest work of his youth; the Last Judgment, that many years later was painted in this same Sistine Chapel, is the greatest work of his

old age ; but the ceiling of the chapel is the most splendid production of his mature fancy. Even to-day it is considered a marvel of modern art which cannot be excelled. Goethe says of it, that even Raphael's paintings are not worth looking at when this has been seen. Other distinguished men confirm this opinion. There is a large space which is covered with representations, and the whole gives one an idea of Michael Angelo's great skill in being able not only to give to his figures the right position as ornaments of the space, but also to make a rich filling-in, thus separating and at the same time uniting the drawings into one great whole. Smoke and dust, and breaks in the walls, have destroyed much of this. Three hundred and fifty years have passed since these paintings were first admired.

Julius II. had striven for the papacy ; his successor, Leo X., from the house of the Medici, strove for his family. Italy bloomed. There was an overflowing population ; the trade of the world was in the hands of its cities ; the sale of indulgences brought into the country sums of money which could not have been obtained by merchants ; everywhere there was building in the cities, and the houses and palaces were decorated.

The greater part of the magnificent paintings which form a foundation for the art of to-day were made at that time. Michael Angelo and Raphael developed an astonishing activity. Michael Angelo was not always in Rome, though he was as much at home there as in Florence ; and both cities overwhelmed him with commissions. It is nowhere recorded that he was silent and reserved. He enjoyed life, that smiled upon him. He belonged to the Academy at Florence, which was founded by Lorenzo, and whose members wrote poetry and philosophized.